

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 08584 071752Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----050482 071759Z /41
O 071609Z JUL 78 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4041
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 8584

EXDIS - DIST AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EG, IS
SUBJECT: GAMASY- WEIZMAN MEETING

REF: CAIRO 16474

1. I NOW THINK IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO TRY TO PROMOTE A GAMASY-WEIZMAN MEETING BEFORE THE LONDON GET TOGETHER. AFTER THE EGYPTIAN COUNTER PROPOSAL, BEGIN AND HIS CABINET ARE NOT ABOUT TO ALLOW WEIZMAN TO INTRODUCE "NEW ELEMENTS" IN ORDER TO STIMULATE TALKS WITH GAMASY. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF NEW ELEMENTS LIKE AN EXPRESSION OF ISRAELI WILLINGNESS (1) TO RETURN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA TO JORDAN AND EGYPT; (2) TO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO WITHDRAW TO THE '67 LINES; (3) TO SETTLE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. IF WE COULD GET THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT TO AGREE TO ANY OR ALL OF THESE ELEMENTS, WE COULD ASPIRE TO SOMETHING OF A GOOD DEAL MORE CONSEQUENCE THAN ANOTHER GAMASY-WEIZMAN MEETING.

2. I ALSO DO NOT THINK WE COULD GET ANY MILEAGE OUT OF WEIZMAN ATTEMPTING TO INTERPRET THE ISRAELI ANSWERS TO OUR TWO QUESTIONS. UNLIKE DAYAN, HE IS NOT MUCH GOOD AT EX-

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PLAINING AWAY INCONSISTENCIES, AND BESIDES SINCE HE OPPOSED THE ANSWERS IN THE FIRST PLACE, HE PROBABLY WOULD NOT HAVE MUCH STOMACH FOR TRYING TO RESUSITATE THEM.

3. FINALLY, I FEAR THAT SUCH A MEETING BEFORE LONDON WOULD SIMPLY CONFUSE JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY ON WHO WAS TALKING TO WHOM WHERE AND ABOUT WHAT. IT SEEMS TO ME BETTER TO KEEP

THE DAYAN-KAMEL MEETING CLEARLY AND SINGLY IN OUR SIGHTS AS THE NEXT STEP, AND THEN DECIDE AFTER LONDON WHEN A SUBSEQUENT GAMASY-WEIZMAN DISCUSSION COULD BE USEFUL.

4. INDEED, ONE CAN IMAGINE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH GETTING THE DEFENSE MINISTERS TOGETHER COULD BE PRODUCTIVE. IF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' DISCUSSION GETS ANYWHERE ON SECURITY ISSUES, AS HERMANN SUGGESTS, WEIZMAN-GAMASY COULD FOLLOW UP LATER. THERE COULD BE AN ARRANGEMENT AT EL ARISH AND BEERSHEVA IN WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTERS AND DEFENSE MINISTERS ALTERNATE THEIR MEETINGS. THAT WOULD GET SINAI BACK INTO THE NEGOTIATING PICTURE. FINALLY, WE MAY NEED TO GET WEIZMAN-GAMASY AGAIN IN DIRECT CONTACT IN ORDER TO GIVE SOME LIFE TO THE PEACE PROCESS IF THE KAMEL-DAYAN TALKS BOMB OUT COMPLETELY. BUT ANY OF THESE POSSIBILITIES SHOULD IN MY JUDGMENT BE CONSIDERED AFTER, RATHER THAN BEFORE LONDON.

5. ONE LAST POINT IN RESPONSE TO HERMANN'S QUESTION ABOUT WHAT PM BEGIN'S PURPOSE IS IN WANTING A GAMASY/WEIZMAN MEETING. THERE IS NO SIMPLE ANSWER. FIRST, I AM CONVINCED BEGIN INCREASINGLY SEES THE NEED FOR REVIVING A DIRECT LINK WITH THE EGYPTIANS. REVIVING THE GAMASY/WEIZMAN CONTACT OFFERS A QUICK, LOW-COST WAY OF RENEWING THE DIALOGUE. SECONDLY, BEGIN'S SKIN IS NO THICKER THAN ANY OTHER POLITICIAN'S AND THE CHARGE OF INTRANSIGENCE IS SECRET

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INCREASINGLY NETTLING. I DO NOT ACCEPT THE PROPOSITION THAT BEGIN REVELS IN A MODE OF INFLEXIBILITY. HE IS EVERY BIT AS ALERT AS WE AND THE EGYPTIANS TO THE IMPLICATIONS OF A FAILURE OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE. BUT ONE OF HIS HANG-UPS HAS BEEN THAT UNTIL RECENTLY HE HAS CLUNG TO THE HOPE THAT SOMEHOW ANOTHER SADAT-BEGIN SUMMIT MIGHT BE MANAGED. I THINK HE FINALLY NOW UNDERSTANDS THIS IS NOT IN THE CARDS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. THUS HE IS MORE INCLINED TO BLESS THE INITIATIVES OF HIS SUBORDINATES, EVEN INCLUDING THOSE OF HIS PUTATIVE SUCCESSOR EZER WEIZMAN, WHOSE PUBLIC POPULARITY WITH SADAT REMAINS PSYCHOLOGICALLY GALLING AND EVEN THREATENING TO BEGIN. FINALLY, WEIZMAN WORKED ON BEGIN AND THE CABINET FOR SIX WEEKS TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO TRY FOR ANOTHER MEETING. WITH CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY HE WAS EVENTUALLY ABLE TO PARLAY THE GAMASY LETTER INTO CABINET AGREEMENT THAT HE COULD TRY TO MEET WITH GAMASY OUTSIDE EGYPT. BUT THAT CONCURRENCE ON THE PART OF BEGIN & CO. FOLLOWED THE ISRAELI RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTIONS. WEIZMAN WAS REQUIRED TO HEW TO THE LINE OF THE CABINET RESPONSE. TO USE A LITTLE UNDERSTATEMENT, HIS LETTER THEREFORE CONTAINED NO NEW ELEMENTS WHICH WOULD BE ENCOURAGING TO SADAT.

LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV08584
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840137-1707
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780783/aaaacs1b.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 78446479-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 78 CAIRO 16474
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2081411
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GAMASY-WEIZMAN MEETING
TAGS: PEPR, IS, US, EG, (GAMASY, MOHAMED ABDEL GHANI), (WEIZMAN, EZER)
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/78446479-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014